



# *Mindfulness*

Engaging in the Present Moment

Mindfulness Practices Booklet©

## **Instructions for Implementation**

This workbook has an initial introduction for you to read to your students prior to the first week of implementing the mindfulness sessions. This introduction explains what mindfulness is, what practices will be explored, and what the students can gain from practicing these activities.

### **Key points to keep in mind:**

- Start by reading the introduction given for the day's activity.
- Follow with reading the mindfulness activity for that day.
- There will be "Notes To Instructor", some citations, and directions included within the text, such as [PAUSE]\* or [PAUSE LONGER]\*\* that aren't necessary to read aloud to students.
- This workbook is presented in a way where you should simply read what it is written down and not improvise on your own.

Key points to keep in mind (continued):

- When reading to students, use a soothing, neutral voice, trying not to insert your own beliefs or attitudes.
- Remember to be open and accepting of any responses and reactions you may receive from your students.

Key

\*[PAUSE] = count of 3

\*\*[PAUSE LONGER] = count of 10

### **Session #1: Introduction**

Today we will be introducing a new element of wellness into our activity class. Has anyone ever heard of mindfulness?

#### ***Note To Instructor:***

Ask individuals what they think mindfulness is and briefly discuss what mindfulness means to them.

Mindfulness can be a variety of things. Graduate Students in a Wellness Management class developed a definition for mindfulness stating that, "Mindfulness is being aware and engaged in the present moment while accepting the reality of life without judgment." During the next few weeks we will be implementing mindfulness practices in our activity classes. These practices will be introduced slowly. We will provide "training wheels" to make it easier for you to complete each activity. Then, halfway through introducing these programs, you will be asked to "take off" your training wheels and practice these mindful activities more independently. We hope you will become more confident in performing these activities on your own.

The activities will help you learn and understand mindfulness as it pertains to your life and your surroundings. These activities can also help you to increase awareness in your life by being present in the moment throughout each activity. Your goal is to master at least one mindful practice that you will be able to apply and use on your own.

You will be introduced to several practices. The first two weeks you will complete four separate body scans. The next activities involve mindful listening. In the third activity series, you will implement mindful walking into your activity classes. You will end the mindfulness segment of the class with visualizations, which will present techniques to help you through the rest of your school semester.

Remember, mindfulness is ongoing and should be practiced on a daily basis to help increase awareness, relaxation, focus, and your overall wellbeing. It can be thought of as a “reality check” in your life. It silences judgments and negativity, brings you into the present moment to boost energy, and prepares you for the day or task ahead.

Next week we will introduce what a body scan is and how one is performed so get ready to become more mindful about your life!

# *Body Scans*

Copyright © FALL 2013 | Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology,

## **Session #2: Body Scan**

### **Introduction:**

During the next two weeks you will learn a mindfulness technique called a body scan. A body scan can direct your focus to your body, allowing you to feel more in the present. These activities will help you quiet your mind and release tension from your body. In class you will be practicing the body scan as a group, but remember, you can also practice this technique on your own.

### **Activity:**

Everyone, please stand and form a circle. Let your arms hang comfortably next to your body. Close your eyes. Think about your physical self, your body as a whole. Don't feel as if you need to make any movements. Begin by bringing your attention to your head. It is held high, acting as the top of your body. Next, observe your ears and the things you hear around you. [PAUSE] Try to focus and listen to the sounds you hear. [PAUSE LONGER]

Next, move down to your chest, where your heart is pumping healthy blood through your veins. Feel your chest move up and down as you take in a deep breath, In through your nose [PAUSE] and out through your mouth. Now, move from your chest out to your shoulders. Your shoulders are strong and firm. Think about how your chest connects to your shoulders as you move on down and think about your arms. They hang comfortably next to your side and assist you in your movements throughout the day.

Now, move down your midsection and observe your hips. Think about how hard they work to support your body. Again, if you notice tension or tightness in your muscles; release and relax those areas. [PAUSE] Lastly, bring your attention down to your feet. Feel your feet press against the earth. Take a deep breath in through your nose [PAUSE] and out through your mouth. One more time, in [PAUSE] and then out. As you feel ready, please rub your hands together to get them warm. Cup your hands over your eyes. Spread your fingers slightly and slowly begin to open your eyes.



### **Session #3: Body Scan**

*Note to instructor: This body scan will be performed lying down. Have the students sit quietly on the floor/ground before the start of the class to save time.*

#### **Introduction:**

Remember, body scans can help improve your sleeping habits, clear your mind, ease stress about homework, and relieve built-up anxiety about different things happening in your life.

#### **Activity:**

Make sure there is enough room around you, and lie on the floor (or ground). Close your eyes and rest your arms comfortably at your side. Clear your mind and allow yourself to focus only on the present moment. [PAUSE] Take a deep breath in through your nose [PAUSE] and out through your mouth. Take another deep breath in [PAUSE] and out.

Think about your head and feel its weight on the floor. [PAUSE LONGER] It may be full of thoughts and ideas. Let all of these thoughts disappear and understand yourself and your

body alone. Next, think about your shoulders. Feel them press against the floor. Feel your chest rise and fall as you breathe. Take a deep breath in through your nose [PAUSE] and then out through your mouth. Again. Breathe in [PAUSE] and breathe out.

Next, move to your arms. Feel the weight of your lifeless arms on the floor. Let any thoughts you may have be absented and focus on the present. [PAUSE] Move on to your legs. Think about all of the work they do for your body. Now, bring your attention to your heels. Feel them press against the floor. Feel your relaxed body on the floor. Take a deep breath in through your nose, [PAUSE] and breathe out from your mouth. And again, in through your nose, [PAUSE] and out through your mouth. Slowly open your eyes and come back to reality.

#### **Session #4: Body Scan**

##### **Introduction:**

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that helps you relax by progressively tensing and relaxing muscle groups throughout your body. This activity helps with focus and easing the anxiety you feel before taking an exam.

Begin by finding a comfortable sitting position. During this exercise you will tense each muscle group and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscle relax. You will tense each muscle for about 5 seconds. Visualize your muscles tensing and a wave of relaxation flowing over them as you release that tension. Feel free to skip any muscle that you feel any pain or discomfort in during the exercise.

##### **Activity:**

Now, allow your attention to focus only on your body. If you begin to notice your mind wandering, bring it back to the muscle you are working on. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. As you inhale, feel your chest rise filling with air. As you exhale, imagine the tension in your body being released. Feel your body

relax. As you go through each step, remember to breathe.

Tighten the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows as high as you can [PAUSE]. Abruptly release, feeling the tension fall away [PAUSE]. Now smile widely, feeling your mouth and cheeks tense [PAUSE]. Release, appreciating the softness in your face. Next, tighten your eye muscles by closing your eyes tightly. Hold and release [PAUSE LONGER].

Gently pull your head back as if to look at the ceiling [PAUSE]. Slowly release, feeling the tension melting away. Now feel the weight of your relaxed head and neck sink. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth [PAUSE].

Now, clench your fists and hold this position. Hold and release [PAUSE]. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Lift your shoulders up as if they could touch your ears. Quickly release, feeling their heaviness [PAUSE]. Tense your upper back by pulling your shoulders back. Try to make your shoulder blades touch. Hold and release [PAUSE]. Gently arch your lower back. Hold this position and release, feeling the limpness in your upper body. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out

through your mouth, letting go of the tension in your muscles [PAUSE LONGER].

Tighten your thighs by pressing your knees together, as if you are holding a penny between them. Hold and release. Move to your feet, flexing and pulling your toes towards you and feeling the tension in your calves. Hold and release, feeling the weight of your legs sinking down. Curl your toes under, tensing your feet. Hold and release [PAUSE]. Imagine a wave of relaxation slowly spreading through your body beginning at your head and going all the way down to your feet. Feel the weight of your relaxed body. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth [PAUSE]. One more time in through your nose and out through your mouth.

## **Session #5: Body Scan**

### **Introduction:**

Remember this exercise can improve your sleeping habits, increase your attention span, help you think clearly about problems in a relationship, ease your anxiety about homework and projects, or ease your anxiety before a big game. Use this exercise to go about your day in a more positive way.

This time we are going to be doing a body scan outside. It works the same way as a body scan done inside. Remember to focus on how each body part feels, without judging or trying to change anything about it. Be in the present moment.

[Take students outside]

### **Activity:**

Let's begin. Everyone please stand up and let your arms hang comfortably to your sides. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Take a deep breath in through your nose and let it out through your mouth.

Notice how grounded your body is, like the trees rooted deeply in the ground that are surrounding you. Feel the air moving around you [PAUSE]. Now bring your attention to the highest part of your head. It is held high, acting as the top of your body. Take a deep breath in...and out [PAUSE]. Next, observe your ears. Hear the sounds that are going on around you. Notice a sound and then let it go. Don't judge the sounds you hear, just listen, taking them in as they are [PAUSE].

Progress down to your chest, where your heart is pumping your healthy blood throughout your veins. Feel your chest move up and down as you take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Feel the air coming into your lungs. Again take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth [PAUSE]. Now, let's move out to your shoulders. They are strong and firm. Think about how your chest connects to your shoulders. Move down to your arms. Think about how your arms lie comfortably next to you and assist you in all your movements throughout the entire day [PAUSE]. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Now, move down your midsection and observe your hips. Notice how hard they work to

keep your upper body up all day long [PAUSE]. Next, progress down to your legs. Observe your legs and how they hold up your entire body [PAUSE]. Lastly, bring your attention down to your feet, the bottom most part of your body. Feel your feet press against the earth. Feel how grounded you are. Take a breath in through your nose and out through your mouth [PAUSE]. One more time, take a deep breath in through your nose, and out through your mouth.



# *Mindful Listening*

Copyright © FALL 2013 | Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology,

## **Session #6: Mindful Listening**

### **Introduction:**

In this section of your mindfulness exploration you will be practicing mindful listening. Mindful listening allows you to be present and aware of what is being said. Often, when someone is speaking, you are just waiting for them to stop so that you can talk. Mindful listening teaches you to listen to a person intently, without interrupting, and without the need to voice opinions. Listening mindfully increases the speaker's feelings of importance, strengthens relationships, and makes it easier for you to fully understand a discussion.

### ***Note to Instructor:***

During this activity you will be playing a song that is very soothing. You can use a song that has been enclosed with this manual or you may choose a song that you think is soothing. Make sure that your students are breathing in through their nose and exhaling through their nose.

Activity:

Today you are going to listen to a song (*Note to Instructor:* play song). Close your eyes and just listen; breathe in...and out [PAUSE]. Hear the melody rise and the sounds intensify; breathe in...and out [PAUSE LONGER]. Your mind may wander. Just focus on the sounds you hear; breathe in...and out [PAUSE]. How does the music make you feel? [PAUSE LONGER]. Focus on that emotion while you are listening [PAUSE LONGER]. Ok, nice job. Now rub your hands together, place them over your eyes, feel the warmth, bring yourself back to the present moment, and slowly open your eyes.

## **Session #7: Mindful Listening**

### **Introduction:**

In this activity, you will practice being more aware of your surroundings. Allow yourself to relax, clear your mind, and focus on the moment. This mindful technique is very helpful before a test if you are feeling anxious.

### ***Note to Instructor:***

Today you will be playing nature sounds. The sounds used will be rain and thunder. You can either use the enclosed MP3 file or you may use an app called Sleep Pillow Sounds, it includes a mix of rain and thunder. Make sure your students are breathing in through their nose and exhale through their mouth.

### **Activity:**

Find a comfortable spot to sit. You can sit propped up against a wall or just in the center. If you want to feel more receptive to your surroundings place your palms facing up. If you want to feel grounded today, place your palms facing down. Today you will listen to the sounds of nature (*Note to Instructor:* Begin playing nature sounds). Go ahead and

close your eyes. Take a deep breath from your belly and exhale audibly through your mouth [PAUSE]. Listen to the sounds your breath makes; breathe in...and out [PAUSE LONGER]. Listen to the rain as it hits the ground; breathe in...and out [PAUSE LONGER]. How does this make you feel? Breathe in...and out [PAUSE LONGER]. As you begin to feel calm, focus your attention to that feeling of calmness; breathe in...and out [PAUSE LONGER]. If you feel anxious, just take a few deep breaths to ease the anxiety [PAUSE]. Listen to the thunder as it booms; breathe in...and out [PAUSE]. If you feel distracted, focus on your breathing and bring your attention to the sounds you hear [PAUSE LONGER]. Now rub your hands together and place them over your eyes, bringing your awareness to the present moment and begin to open your eyes slowly.

## **Session #8: Mindful Listening**

### **Introduction:**

This activity will help you become more engaged in the present moment and aware of your current environment.

### **Activity:**

Today you are going to go outside and listen to your environment. [Take class outside.] Find a comfortable place to stand or sit. If you decide to stand make sure you feel grounded and if you are sitting make sure to sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and listen to the environment. [PAUSE] What do you notice? Are there any sounds that are very prominent in the background? [PAUSE LONGER] Take a few deep breaths and clear your mind. [PAUSE] Focus on your breathing and let the sounds just come and go as they please. If your mind wanders, just take a few deep breaths and refocus on the sounds in your environment. [PAUSE LONGER] Rub your hands together to generate some heat. Place your warm hands on your eyes and slowly open your eyes.

## **Session #9: Mindful Listening**

### **Introduction:**

Mindful listening teaches you to listen to a person intently, without interrupting, and without the need voice opinions. Practicing mindful listening helps strengthen relationships and helps you better focus in class.

### **Activity:**

Today you are going to walk and talk. The purpose of this activity is to be mindful of what others are telling you. Get into groups of two. While you are walking, tell each other a story from your childhood that positively affected you. The person who is listening cannot talk and must listen to what the other person is saying. Switch roles between listener and speaker every few minutes. While you are walking and talking really focus on what the other person is saying and tune the environment out. Focus all of your attention on the story.

# *Mindful Walking*

Copyright © FALL 2013 | Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology,



## **Session #10: Mindful Walking**

### *Note to Instructor:*

Read this to your students before they walk. You will not be able to talk to them during their walking activity.

### Introduction:

Over the next two weeks we will expand upon our mindfulness activities and introduce the practice of mindful walking. Mindful walking combines walking and being in the present moment. Walking is a part of daily life, so it can be a tool you utilize without taking time out of your schedule.

### Activity:

Our first session will incorporate and expand upon the body scan activity you practiced in the first 4 sessions. For the first minute of your walk, notice the sensation of your feet hitting the ground. Notice the process of moving your legs. What muscles tense or relax as you move? Notice where you are stepping, the quality of each step. Are you stepping

hard or lightly onto the ground? Feel of the ground beneath your feet. Is it firm or soft? Focus only on the movements of your body.

*Note to Instructor:*

After the students complete their minute of mindful walking, bring them back together and read the following section.

As you complete your walk, recognize your intention to practice mindful walking, no matter how many times your mind was pulled away from the walk, or how "well" you thought your practice went today. Remember, the intention to be mindful is the key to practice.

### **Session #11: Mindful Walking**

#### *Note to Instructor:*

Read this to your students before they walk. You will not be able to talk to them during their walking activity.

#### Introduction:

During this session you will incorporate external environments and sensations into your walking activity. Whether walking to and from class, work, volunteering, social events, dining courts or home you can use this activity to bring focus and awareness to your current self.

#### Activity:

For the first minute of your walk, expand your awareness to notice your surroundings. As you walk, what do you see, smell, hear, taste, and feel? How does the air feel on your skin? What do you notice around you? Focus only on your external surroundings.

#### *Note to Instructor:*

Copyright © FALL 2013 | Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology,

After the students complete their minute of mindful walking, bring them back together and read the following section.

As you complete your walk, recognize your intention to practice mindful walking, no matter how many times your mind was pulled away from the walk, or how "well" you thought your practice went today. Remember, the intention to be mindful is the key to practice.

## **Session #12: Mindful Walking**

### *Note to Instructor:*

Read this to your students before they walk. You will not be able to talk to them during their walking activity.

### Introduction:

In today's session you will incorporate external environments and sensations into your walking activity. Whether walking to and from class, work, volunteering, social events, dining courts or home you can use this activity to bring focus and awareness to your current self.

### Activity:

For the first minute of your walk, expand your awareness to your internal experiences, like your thoughts and emotions. What thoughts cross your mind as you walk? What emotion or emotions are you feeling right now? Are they intense, or mild? Are these internal experiences pulling you in or can you observe them with a little distance? You

don't need to judge these internal experiences as good or bad, practice just noticing them for what they are.

*Note to Instructor:*

After the students complete their minute of mindful walking, bring them back together and read the following section.

As you complete your walk, recognize your intention to practice mindful walking, no matter how many times your mind was pulled away from the walk, or how "well" you thought your practice went today. Remember, the intention to be mindful is the key to practice.

### **Session #13: Mindful Walking**

#### *Note to Instructor:*

Read this to your students before they walk. You will not be able to talk to them during their walking activity.

#### Introduction:

During this session you will combine two mindful walking activities of your choice that you explored in the last few sessions. Choose from the body scan, the external environment, and internal emotions to incorporate into your walking activity. Whether walking to and from class, work, volunteering, social events, dining courts or home you can use this activity to bring focus and awareness to your current self.

#### Activity:

For the first minute of your walk, combine your chosen mindful walking activities. Explore your external environment and internal emotions or focus on your body and internal emotions. Combine the two that are the most beneficial for you.

*Note to Instructor:*

After the students complete their minute of mindful walking, bring them back together and read the following section.

As you complete your walk, recognize your intention to practice mindful walking, no matter how many times your mind was pulled away from the walk, or how "well" you thought your practice went today. Remember, the intention to be mindful is the key to practice.



# *Visualization*

Copyright © FALL 2013 | Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology,

## **Session #14: Visualization**

### **Introduction:**

For these last two weeks, your mindfulness practice will be visualizations. Visualization techniques, sometimes called guided imagery, place a strong focus on the mental self. It provides a holistic experience, making use of mental imagery and your imagination. Visualizations also involve your emotions and thoughts and can help you reduce mental tension, open your mind for deeper thinking, and help with specific issues like sleep problems and test anxiety. These exercises ultimately help to increase your mindfulness of the present moment, helping to clear away thoughts about past and future events.

### **Activity:**

Let's begin. Take a deep breath and when you're comfortable, begin to close your eyes [PAUSE]. Take a moment to imagine yourself being more calm, peaceful and focused [PAUSE]. As you allow your unconscious mind to naturally create an image of what that would feel like, consider what you might be seeing [PAUSE LONGER], hearing [PAUSE

LONGER] and what you might be feeling [PAUSE LONGER] that shows you are more calm, peaceful and focused [PAUSE LONGER]. Perhaps you are already feeling calmer, more peaceful, and focused [PAUSE]. Now, think of a simple way to incorporate this feeling of calm into your life in the days and weeks ahead [PAUSE LONGER]. After you do this, know that it can be this easy to create a little more peace and calm in your life [PAUSE]. Now take a breath for a moment, and begin to move your attention back to the room, listening to the sounds around you and begin to open your eyes [PAUSE].

## **Session #15: Visualization**

### **Introduction:**

Much of the emotional distress people experience is the result of dwelling on things that have already happened or anticipating negative events that have yet to occur. This exercise helps you become more aware of the present moment, focusing on those things most important to you. By practicing this activity, you can also gain tools to help reduce stress or even conquer end-of-semester jitters.

### **Activity:**

Take a deep breath and when you're comfortable, begin to close your eyes [PAUSE]. Don't try to change anything about your breathing, just notice the sensations of breathing air into and out of your body [PAUSE]. Try to focus all of your attention on your breathing [PAUSE]. As you breathe, close your eyes and imagine that you are laying on a lawn of soft grass, looking up at the blue sky [PAUSE]. Let your mind become as clear and empty as that perfect blue sky [PAUSE LONGER]. If any thoughts drift into your mind, imagine yourself breathing them out so that each thought forms a cloud that you send blowing across the clear, blue sky above you [PAUSE LONGER]. Allow your thoughts to

drift away from you [PAUSE], like clouds across the sky, until your mind becomes empty again – only filled by the image of the clouds in front of you [PAUSE LONGER]. Now, when you are ready, take a deep breath and open your eyes.

## **Session #16: Visualization**

### **Introduction:**

Much of the emotional distress people experience is the result of dwelling on things that have already happened or anticipating negative events that have yet to occur. This exercise helps you become more aware of the present moment, focusing on those things most important to you. By practicing this activity, you can also gain tools that can help you deal with specific concerns, such as sleeping problems or enhancing coping skills.

### **Activity:**

Take a deep breath and when you're comfortable, begin to close your eyes [PAUSE]. Don't try to change anything about your breathing [PAUSE]. Just notice the sensations of breathing air into and out of your body [PAUSE]. Try to focus all of your attention on your breathing [PAUSE LONGER]. As you breathe, you may notice that a thought comes to mind, or you may become aware of a sensation, or experience an emotion of some kind [PAUSE]. Continue breathing and noticing thoughts, sensations, and emotions as you become aware of them [PAUSE LONGER]. Now, imagine that your mind contains three

boxes. One box is labeled “Thoughts”, one box is labeled “Sensations”, and one box is labeled “Emotions” [PAUSE].

Continue focusing on your breathing and if anything else comes into your awareness, observe whether it is a thought [PAUSE], a sensation [PAUSE], or an emotion and imagine sorting it into the right box [PAUSE LONGER]. Continue clearing your mind of any thoughts, sensations, or emotions by putting each in their correct box [PAUSE LONGER]. Now, when you are ready, take a deep breath and open your eyes.

## **Session #17: Visualization**

### **Introduction:**

Guided Imagery uses visualizations and imagination to bring a greater awareness to the mind and body. By imagining a vivid story, you can gain tools to help better experience your emotions. You can learn to promote positive habits, enhance coping skills, encourage self-esteem, and increase creativity.

### **Activity:**

Take a deep breath and when you're comfortable, begin to close your eyes [PAUSE]. Imagine you are at the seashore on a beautiful day. It's the perfect time of day, and the perfect time of year for you to be there [PAUSE]. Imagine the warmth of the sun on the top of your head and your shoulders and allow this image to develop [PAUSE]. Maybe there's a pleasant breeze, which you feel on your face and arms. Smell the refreshing, salty breeze off the water, and breathe [PAUSE LONGER]. Hear the deep, calming, rhythmic sound of the waves breaking on the beach. Look out to the horizon, and notice the waves as far back as you can see, rolling toward the shore [PAUSE], breaking



[PAUSE], and glittering in the sunlight. Notice the place where the surf meets the sky, and see where the colors come together [PAUSE LONGER].

Let yourself feel the expanse of the sky, and imagine breathing that in [PAUSE], filling yourself with that feeling of spaciousness, brightness and light [PAUSE LONGER]. Take a deep breath in and out and appreciate this feeling of relaxation [PAUSE]. Without judgment, take note of what you are experiencing in your thoughts [PAUSE] and emotions right now [PAUSE LONGER]. I hope that this has allowed you to relax and retreat to a happy place in your mind. Feel free to take this feeling with you throughout the rest of your day. Now, when you are ready, take a deep breath and open your eyes.

### **Session #18: Conclusion**

This is the conclusion of the mindful activities you have practiced over the last few weeks of class.

We hope that these mindful activities have proved to be helpful and easy to add to your daily routine. Overall, we have practiced body scans, mindful listening, and walking activities, as well as visualization techniques. By now, I hope you have the confidence to practice these activities on your own and be more mindful throughout your day. You can now understand mindfulness as it pertains to your life and your surroundings. By practicing each activity, you can learn to increase awareness in your life by being present in the moment.

Remember, mindfulness is ongoing and should be practiced on a daily basis to help increase awareness, relaxation, focus, and your overall wellbeing. It can be thought of as a "reality check" in your life. It silences judgments and negativity, brings you into the present moment to boost energy, and prepares you for the day or task ahead.

